

heart; and

forming an opening in the patient's pericardium;
introducing the ablation device through the opening in the pericardium;
positioning the elongate ablating portion in contact with a portion of the patient's
ablating tissue with the elongate ablating portion.

2 ²⁷/₂₆. The method of claim ¹/₂₆, wherein:
the ablating step is carried out to form a pulmonary vein isolation lesion which
electrically isolates at least one of the pulmonary veins.

3 ²⁸/₂₆. The method of claims ¹/₂₆ or ²/₂₇, wherein:
the ablating step is carried out with the elongate ablating portion contacting an
epicardial surface.

4 ²⁹/₂₆. The method of claim ²/₂₇, further comprising the step of:
forming a lesion extending from the pulmonary vein isolation lesion to the
annulus of the mitral valve.

5 ³⁰/₂₆. The method of claim ²/₂₇, wherein:
the ablating step is carried out with the pulmonary vein isolation lesion being
formed by creating a first lesion adjacent to two of the pulmonary veins.

6 ³¹/₂₆. The method of claim ⁵/₃₀, wherein:
the ablating step is carried out with the pulmonary vein isolation lesion being
formed by creating a second lesion near the other two pulmonary veins.

7 ³²/₂₆. The method of claim ⁶/₃₁, wherein:
the ablating step is carried out with the pulmonary vein isolation lesion being
formed by creating a third lesion which connects the first and second lesions.

8 ³³/₂₆. The method of claim ⁷/₃₂, wherein:



the ablating step is carried out with the third lesion being formed by two lesions.

503 [34. The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of:
inserting the ablation device into the patient's heart through a penetration in the
patient's heart.

10 35. ⁹ The method of claim 34, wherein:
the positioning step is carried out with the elongate ablating portion being in
contact with an epicardial surface.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein:
the inserting step is carried out with the ablation device extending through a
hemostatic seal in an atrial wall.

12 37. ¹¹ The method of claim 36, wherein:
the inserting step is carried out with the hemostatic seal being a purse-string
suture.

13 38. ¹ The method of claim 26, wherein:
the providing step is carried out with a plurality of ablation devices, each of the
ablation devices having at least one elongate ablating portion; and
the ablating step is carried out using the plurality of ablation devices.

14 39. ¹³ The method of claim 38, wherein:
the plurality of ablation devices have different shapes.

15 40. ¹⁴ The method of claim 39, wherein:
the providing step is carried out with each of the ablation devices being shaped to
engage a predetermined surface of the heart.

16 41. ¹⁵ The method of claim 40, wherein:

the providing step is carried out with the predetermined surface of the heart being an interior wall of the heart.

^{17/}~~42.~~ The method of claim ^{16/}~~41~~, wherein:
the providing step is carried out with the predetermined surface of the heart being an interior wall of an atria chamber.

^{18/}~~43.~~ The method of claim ^{1/}~~26~~, further comprising the steps of:
moving the elongate ablating portion to another position; and
forming another elongate ablation after the moving step.

^{19/}~~44.~~ The method of claim ^{1/}~~26~~, further comprising the step of:
forming a series of elongate ablations which cooperate with one another to treat atrial fibrillation.

^{20/}~~45.~~ The method of claim ^{1/}~~26~~, wherein:
the providing step is carried out with the ablating element being a cryosurgical element.

^{21/}~~46.~~ The method of claim ^{1/}~~26~~, wherein:
the providing step is carried out with the ablating element being an ablating element selected from the group consisting of cryosurgical, RF ablation, ultrasound, microwave, laser, chemical agent, biological agent, light-activated agent, laser ablation and resistance heating ablation.

^{22/}~~47.~~ The method of claim ^{1/}~~26~~, wherein:
the providing step is carried out with the elongate ablating surface extending a distance of at least about 7 times to about 30 times an outer diameter.

[^{23/}~~48.~~ The method of claim ^{1/}~~26~~, wherein:

[the providing step is carried out with the ablation device having a first jaw and a second jaw which are movable toward and away from one another to clamp a cardiac structure.

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B₁ ²³/₄₉. The method of claim ¹/₂₆, further comprising the step of:
measuring a temperature of a wall of the heart on a side opposite the elongate
ablating portion.

²⁴/₅₀. The method of claim ²³/₄₉, wherein:
the measuring step is carried out to determine when the ablating step is complete.

²⁵/₅₁. The method of claim ¹/₂₆, wherein:
the providing step is carried out with the elongate ablating surface being
malleable.--